

Town of Arlington Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

Tuesday, June 26, 2003 7:15 PM

Committee members present: Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Ralph Elwell, Larry Englisher, Lt. Jim McHugh, John Sanchez, Scott Smith

Also present: Chris Leich (Pleasant Street neighborhood representative)

Administration

The minutes of 5/27 were approved unanimously.

Critical Crosswalk Signs

John Sanchez reported that the Public Works Department had ordered the fluorescent yellow-green signs for the crosswalks on Summer Street at Oak Hill Drive and Pleasant Street at Kensington Park. He expected that the signs would arrive and be installed within a week. The signs ordered combine a diamond crosswalk sign above a rectangular sign with a diagonally down-pointing arrow.

John Sanchez explained that the reflective signpost stripes requested by the Crosswalk Working Group were not ordered due to their high cost (over \$100 per sign). At Elisabeth Carr-Jones' suggestion, Committee members agreed to survey the installed signs to evaluate if the reflective signpost stripes would be a worthwhile expenditure of TAC funds, and discuss the matter at the next meeting. John also reported that the "crosswalk ahead" signs on Summer Street will be removed when the new signs are installed.

Pleasant Street Update

Scott Smith, acting as meeting Chair, announced that David Walkinshaw would not be able to attend the meeting to report on Pleasant Street. Chris Leach reported that the greatest worry of the Pleasant Street neighbors is that large trucks, moving at high speed in the low-traffic nighttime hours, will go off the roadway. Lieutenant McHugh stated that enforcement on this roadway is difficult, and that the new speed limit, curve warning and crosswalk signs should help to reduce traffic speed and increase safety. He also enlisted the neighbors to report any violations that they see directly to him.

Sign-mounted speed monitors and photographic warnings were discussed as options by the Committee, although preliminary research indicates that the equipment required for these may be prohibitively expensive. Larry Englisher suggested writing to companies whose trucks are known to use Pleasant Street. Residents could identify companies that frequently use the street, and the Police Department can send letters, requesting that company truck drivers respect the roadway's speed limit.

Chris Leach asked about the inconsistencies of the traffic count numbers that have been collected on Pleasant Street. Scott Smith noted a similar discrepancy for the counts on Mass. Ave. where the APD counts are about 30% lower than those obtained earlier by traffic consultants. Lieutenant McHugh and John Sanchez explained that the numbers were influenced by the type of counting equipment used. If a single-tube system is used (as is the case with most traffic consultants) trucks and other large vehicles are counted twice. The equipment purchased by the town and used by the Police Department is a multiple-tube system, resulting in more accurate counts. Verification of the counts provided by the town's equipment, especially for large vehicles, can be performed visually by members of the Committee and neighbors.

Measurement Status

Lieutenant McHugh distributed the traffic count data from 255 and 260 Massachusetts Avenue (in the vicinity of Harlow Street and Elmhurst Road) collected by the APD Traffic Unit. He also announced that the traffic counts in the vicinity of the Symmes site were completed and that he would supply the data to Elisabeth Carr-Jones for her report to the Symmes Advisory Committee.

Crosswalk Working Group Update

Larry Englisher distributed the Crosswalk Guidelines Summary and Critical Crosswalks Table developed by the Crosswalk Working Group. He and Scott Smith provided commentary on the Guidelines Summary, documenting how the material had been acquired and how it applies to Arlington. Committee members were asked to further review the materials and report to Larry with any comments. The Working Group's next step is to finalize the Guidelines Summary and complete the Critical Crosswalks Table for approval by the Committee.

Scott Smith asked about the status of the advance yield lines planned for the crosswalk on Massachusetts Avenue at Town Hall; John Sanchez reported that they would be installed during this painting cycle. Lieutenant McHugh requested that any chip sealing that is done by the Public Works Department this year be conducted in coordination with crosswalk pavement painting; John Sanchez said that he would do his best. Elisabeth Carr-Jones inquired about the Town's curb cut restrictions, pointing out that some crossings are made less safe for pedestrians due to the close proximity of curb cuts; John Sanchez said that he would check into the Town's By-Laws and send comments to the Working Group.

TAC By-Laws Update

Ralph Elwell reported that he had incorporated the changes to the By-Laws from the last meeting, submitted the revised document to Jack Hurd and informed the other Selectmen that the document is in the works. Ralph said that he would e-mail the revised By-Laws to the Committee for final comments. Upon approval by the Committee, he will submit the document to the Selectmen.

Domino's Pizza Parking Spot

Lieutenant McHugh reviewed the efforts to remove the parking space on Massachusetts Avenue at Water Street in front of Domino's Pizza. As a result of the TAC's approved recommendations a sign and yellow curb paint had been installed, but the old pavement markings defining the space were proving difficult to paint over. The ambiguity of the parking space has resulted in confusion and frequent violations. John Sanchez suggested that a single application of painted crosshatching be installed over the space to remove the ambiguity until the parking space markings wear off. The Committee approved the suggestion.

Hutchinson Road Update

Larry Englisher reported that the neighbors were pleased with the recent enforcement efforts by the Arlington and Winchester Police, that a meeting about Hutchinson Road had been held in Winchester and that he was awaiting word on the meeting's outcome. Larry stated that his next step would be to conduct a walking survey of Hutchinson Road with the neighbors to identify and evaluate specific trouble spots.

Lieutenant McHugh reported that his research on Hutchinson Road indicated that the 25 MPH speed limit was instituted in 1979, after a serious auto crash occurred there. He also reported that a traffic count for Oldham Road was on the list and would most likely be conducted in November. Elisabeth Carr-Jones asked about the possibility of installing lane markings on Hutchinson Road; John Sanchez said that he would measure the road width to determine if lane markings could be used.

Massachusetts Avenue Corridor Update

Scott Smith reported that he had met with George Laite to discuss strategy for the Mass Ave Corridor project this fall. If the Committee's request for Community Development Block Grant funding is granted, we can expect the money to further the project in August. Scott stated that decisions should be made soon regarding the breakdown of the funds between community events and engineering work. He said that the next step would be to engage the commercial sector in the process.

Pace Car Update

Ralph Elwell reported that he and Elisabeth Carr-Jones would collect materials and ideas for the Pace Car campaign to be discussed at the next TAC meeting. It was agreed that the TAC should apply for a table at Town Day to kick off the campaign; Scott Smith volunteered to make the application for the Committee.

Zip Car Update

Ralph Elwell reported that, according to Alan McClennen, the Town By-Laws would not currently permit Zip Car to occupy overnight spaces in Arlington. The Committee anticipated that when the plan for overnight permit parking in the Town's lots was implemented, that parking for Zip Car would also become possible.

Town Transportation News

Ralph Elwell announced a plan to organize a community group in the Downing Square area as a response to the serious hit and run pedestrian crash there recently. The Committee endorsed the plan and commended the Arlington Police for their fine work in apprehending the driver in the hit and run crash.

Scott Smith announced that the Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee had begun discussing the idea of broadening the focus of the annual Bike Arlington tour (held in May) to an Alternative Transportation Day, in collaboration with other groups such as Walking in Arlington and TAC.

John Sanchez reported that the Summer Street reconstruction project was still on track, but that the State was requiring more reports before allowing work to begin.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM.

Handouts:

Agenda packet including Meeting Agenda of 6/26/03 & Meeting Minutes of 5/27/03 - from Scott Smith

Crosswalk Guidelines Summary and Critical Crosswalk Table - from Larry Englisher

Traffic Count Data for 255 and 260 Massachusetts Avenue - from Lt. McHugh